



For Immediate Release

Mailing Date: Wednesday, September 19, 2001

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Friends of Retzer To Raise Money For Expansion

Waukesha, WIS. – The Friends of Retzer Nature Center, a private support group for Retzer Nature Center in Waukesha, will announce plans to raise \$300,000 for a new learning center, through the “Come Grow With Us” fundraising campaign, at the facility during Apple Harvest Festival, on Saturday, September 22, at 11 a.m.

Waukesha County Executive Daniel M. Finley said, “The Friends’ monetary commitment is greatly appreciated and will enhance further development within the park.”

The proposed center will be 5,000 sq. ft., and will provide increased space for exhibits, visitors and classes. Funds raised will help offset one-third of Waukesha County’s project commitment, which is slated for the 2003 capital budget.

Dick Nawrocki, President of Friends, said, “So many people benefit from Retzer Nature Center, both as visitors and from its enhancement to our quality of life.”

The “Come Grow With Us” campaign has received early monetary commitments, totaling \$100,000, to help kick off the organization’s efforts. Waukesha State Bank gave \$30,000 and the Anthony and Andrea B. Bryant Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation gave \$15,000.

“These early gifts are really special,” said Nawrocki. “We are so grateful for the generosity of these supporters.”

The additional monies came from the Friends Board of Directors, area businesses, foundations and individual contributions.

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In 1973, Florence Horn Retzer bequeathed her property to Waukesha County for park purposes. Her vision was “to conserve the scenery, natural life and wildlife, leaving the land unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” Guided by Mrs. Retzer’s wishes, the Waukesha County Park System began developing the nature center in 1974.

Significant land acquisitions between 1980 and 1984 expanded the site to 335 acres. The Center focuses on environmental education, natural land management, community restoration and wildlife habitat improvement.

“Retzer is a wonderful facility,” said Finley. “Its lush scenery and rolling open space enrich our growing community.”

Today, restored prairies, a colorful butterfly garden and an oak opening demonstration area greet over 20,000 visitors annually and compliment the Retzer’s original homestead.

For more information, please contact Meghan Walsh in the County Executive’s Office at (262) 548 -7902.